

Exaudi  
St. John 15:26—16:4  
June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2019  
Sts. Peter & Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC  
Simpsonville, SC  
Pastor Jerald Dulas+

## He Will Testify of Me

*In Nomine Iesu!*

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

### **Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:**

Lord God, heavenly Father, we give thanks unto Thee, that through Thy Holy Spirit Thou hast appointed us to bear witness of Thy dear Son, our Lord Jesus Christ: We beseech Thee, inasmuch as the world cannot endure such testimony, and persecutes us in every way, grant us courage and comfort, that we may not be offended because of the cross, but continue steadfastly in Thy testimony, and be found always among those who know Thee and Thy Son, until we obtain eternal salvation through the same, Thy Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, one true God, world without end. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

In the Church's year we focus upon the Lord + Jesus Christ and what He has done for us, and continues to do for us. Just look at what we have heard in this Church year. In Advent we heard about our Lord's coming. At Christmas we heard about our Lord's incarnation and birth. During Epiphany we heard our Lord being revealed as the Lord and Savior of mankind to the world. When we were in Gesimatide we heard about how the Lord + Jesus calls into the Church, instructs in the faith, and enlightens with the promises found in His works and merits. Then in Lent we heard about those works and merits; that He fulfilled the Law perfectly for us who continuously and daily break His Commandments, and that He suffered and died as a payment for our transgressions of the Law on the tree of the holy cross. Finally, we heard about our Lord's resurrection, which gives us proof that the heavenly Father accepted the sacrifice that our Lord + Jesus made for us on the tree of the holy cross.

Therefore, most of the Church's year so far has been focused on our Lord + Jesus and His works and merits. He is our Good Shepherd, Who draws us to Himself through the means of grace. But the last few Sundays, and next Sunday, the Gospel readings have been mostly focused on our Helper and Comforter, our Paraclete, the Holy Ghost. He is the One Who does the work of drawing us closer to our Good Shepherd—our Lord + Jesus Christ—through the means of grace. He has been sent to us by the Father, on account of the Lord's victory over sin, death and the devil, so that He might enlighten our sin-filled hearts with the light of the holy Gospel.

Over the last few weeks we have rejoiced in our Lord's merits. We have sung of our Lord's tender mercies. We have prayed to the heavenly Father to grant us grace and mercy on account of what our Lord has done for us. And today, we are told to listen—to hear. That is what *Exaudi* means, "to hear." The Holy Ghost has been working through the means of grace these last few Sundays to open our hearts so that we might rejoice, and sing, and pray, and today that we might hear with joy how our Lord + Jesus purchased and won us through His suffering and death on the tree of the holy cross.

So then, even though the focus of the Gospel reading the last few Sundays have talked about

the Holy Ghost and His work to enlighten our hearts to the salvation found in the Christ through faith, the Holy Ghost works through the word to point us away from Himself and back to our Lord + Jesus Christ. For, He is the focus of all the Church's year. The Spirit of Truth—the Holy Ghost—always points those who believe to the Christ; to the One Who has fulfilled the Law of God for us, and has suffered and died on our behalf. The Holy Ghost—the Spirit of Truth—always wants to lead us into the truth of the Word of God.

This is why the enemies of God—the enemies of the Truth—seek to preach a false gospel and a false Christ. They work against the Spirit of Truth to spread lies about what the Lord + Jesus does, and Who He is. Certainly there are the blatant false preachers, like the ones that our Lord + Jesus talks about in the Gospel reading from the Apostle and Evangelist St. John. They desired to throw the Apostles, and all Christians, out of the synagogues. They claimed the Apostles and those who adhered to their teachings were believing a false religion, but the Jews were the ones who adhered to a false religion, because the Messiah had come—their Messiah—and they rejected Him. They clung to useless animal sacrifices as a means to their salvation, and rejected the once and for all time sacrifice of our Lord + Jesus on the holy cross.

There are blatant false preachers today, who distort the truth the Lord would have us hear. They teach all sorts of false things that anybody who actually reads the Holy Scriptures can know that they are false. These false preachers endorse every evil, progressive philosophy of our society: homosexuality, abortion, and the like. They claim that these sins are somehow pleasing to the Lord God. They are in grave error, and it is easy for us to discern that error when we read and hear the Holy Scriptures, because the Spirit of Truth speaks into our ears the truth of the Word.

These blatant false preachers are easy to discern because it is full of lies and therefore easy to mark and avoid. But there are also those whose false preaching is masked in enough truth that it leads many astray, because it sounds like the truth, but it is not. For example, the many false preachers that teach objective justification. The teaching that the whole world is justified, that is, made right with God, at the cross regardless whether they possess faith or not. The more extreme teachers of this doctrine make the claim that there are forgiven sinners in Hell. The more subtle teachers try to separate justification into two parts, an objective justification and a subjective justification, that is, that we are subjectively justified when we have faith in the objective justification of the cross. However, these terms are not used at all in either the Holy Scriptures, or in the Lutheran confessions. The first teacher of this doctrine, Huber, was condemned by the early Lutheran theologians.

This teaching sounds like the truth to some people, because it causes a confusion between atonement and justification. There are those who equate those two terms to mean the same thing. But atonement and justification are not synonyms. The atonement is the payment that our Lord made on behalf of the whole world on the tree of the cross. We are justified through faith. There are not two parts to justification, which is a foreign concept to the Lutheran Book of Concord. In the Apology to the Augsburg Confession in article four it continuously talks about being justified by faith. These things are plain to those who read. But as you know, there are still many people who are led away by this subtle false and misleading doctrine.

Those who listen to these false and misleading teachings are being put out of the synagogues of truth; they are being kept away from hearing the truth of the Word of God. We can relate to this. For, how many friends and relatives do we have who for the sake of worshiping with family, or because of a particular tie to a church body that they have been a member of, and their family has been a member of, remain in these churches that teach a false and misleading doctrine.

This is why we are told today to “hear.” We are told to listen to the Spirit of Truth, to discern when false doctrine is being taught, and to cling to the word of the truth. The Holy Ghost—the Spirit of Truth—

we are promised will guide us into all truth. He will convict our hard hearts of sin, and of false doctrine, and He will lead us to the green pastures of the pure Word of God. He will lead us to the cross of our Lord + Jesus Christ, Who on the holy cross atoned for our sins, and the sins of the whole world. To this Gospel—this promise of redemption—our faith clings; the faith that the Holy Ghost creates and sustains through the means of grace. We are justified through our faith, which the Holy Ghost gifted with, to believe in the atonement of our Lord + Jesus on the holy cross. Through this faith we believe that our sins have been forgiven, and because they are forgiven, we also have the promise of an eternal life with our beloved Triune God and with all the saints in Heaven. We also, through this faith, believe that we have been saved and rescued from all our enemies; from sin, death and the power of the devil.

This is what the Spirit of Truth—the Holy Ghost—desires us to hear today. It is His work to bring us into the truth and lead us away from false teaching. He does this through the Word of God taught in its truth and purity and through the Blessed Sacraments administered according to Christ's institution. The last few Sundays we have heard more about this work of the Holy Ghost, and we will hear even more next Sunday when we celebrate Whitsunday, the Feast of Pentecost. But even though we have heard more about the work of the Holy Ghost the last few Sundays, the Holy Ghost never wants the focus to be completely on Him. He desires to direct us to the focus of the entire Church's year—our Lord + Jesus Christ and His works and merits. For in our Lord + Jesus we have redemption, and in Him alone we have life and salvation. Listen and hear His Word alone. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:**

Almighty God, Who hast given us commandment to pray for the gift of the Holy Ghost, most heartily we beseech Thee, through Jesus Christ, our Advocate, to grant us Thy Holy Spirit, that He may quicken our hearts by Thy saving Word, and lead us into all truth, that He may guide, instruct, enlighten, govern, comfort, and sanctify us unto everlasting life; through the same, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

**The Votum:**

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

*Soli Deo Gloria!*